

SENATE RESOLUTION 32

By Gardenhire

A RESOLUTION relative to the observance of April 2021 as
Second Chance Month.

WHEREAS, every person is endowed with human dignity and value; redemption and second chances are American values; and

WHEREAS, an estimated seventy million Americans have a criminal record; individuals returning from prison and individuals who have paid their debt to society after committing a crime face significant barriers, also known as collateral consequences; and

WHEREAS, individuals with a criminal history often struggle to find housing, employment, and education, regain voting rights, volunteer in their communities, and repay the significant debt resulting from their conviction and incarceration; and

WHEREAS, the stigma and legal barriers associated with a criminal record result in lost human capital and lost economic output for the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, youth returning from detention face more than one thousand collateral consequences affecting their high school performance and access to higher education; these barriers can contribute to recidivism, which increases victimization and decreases public safety; and

WHEREAS, April 12, 2021, is the anniversary of the death of Charles "Chuck" Colson, who used his "second chance" following his incarceration for a Watergate-related crime to found Prison Fellowship, the nation's largest outreach to prisoners and their families; and

WHEREAS, since April 2017, a robust coalition of businesses, congregations, and other organizations across the country has celebrated Second Chance Month through prayer walks, Second Chance Sunday services, public briefings, social media campaigns, advocacy, press releases, Second Chance races, and other events and activities; and

WHEREAS, the designation of April as Second Chance Month has increased public awareness about the need for closure for those who have paid their debt and opportunities for employers, congregations, and communities to extend second chances to individuals with a criminal record; and

WHEREAS, Senate Resolution 129 of the 115th Congress designated April 2017 and each subsequent April as Second Chance Month to honor the work of communities, governmental entities, nonprofit organizations, congregations, employers, and individuals in removing unnecessary legal and societal barriers that prevent an individual with a criminal record from becoming a productive member of society; and

WHEREAS, Senate Resolution 129 calls on the people of the United States to observe Second Chance Month through actions and programs that promote awareness of collateral consequences and provide closure for individuals who have paid their debt to society; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we join Tennesseans and Americans from all walks of life in observing April 2021 as Second Chance Month.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.